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Thursday, 19 September 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jan Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: We shall now continue the general debate.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Lassana Traore, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali.

Mr. Traore (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to tell you, Sir, how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over the work of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. To your predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, I should also like to express my sincere and warm congratulations on the competence, devotion and authority with which he guided the work of the fifty-sixth session.

I should also like to express again to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the Organization, the warm congratulations and profound gratitude of the Government of Mali for the effectiveness and wisdom he has shown in managing the concerns of the international community in a particularly difficult context. I take this opportunity to reiterate to the Secretary-General the thanks of His Excellency Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Republic of Mali, for the confidence that the Secretary-General has placed in him in seeking solutions to certain conflicts that are shaking Africa. He expresses Mali 's readiness to continue to work for the preservation of international peace and security, particularly in Africa.

Mali wishes to welcome to the Organization Switzerland and Timor-Leste, whose admission strengthens the universal character of the United Nations.

The fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly is opening in an international context marked by the persistence of areas of tension, of development inequalities and of growing poverty among the peoples in developing countries, of the sad consequences of globalization, of natural disasters and of the extremely difficult consequences of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, whose first anniversary the international community has just commemorated. At the time, Mali vigorously condemned those attacks, which nothing can justify. Since then, it has participated in the great international campaign of the fight against terrorism. In so doing, it has ratified all international legal instruments related to the fight against terrorism. Likewise, important means and mechanisms have been put in place so that Mali 's national territory cannot be used for the preparation or perpetration of terrorist acts.

In order to meet the terrorist threat, it is important that the international community strengthen cooperation among its members. Furthermore, Mali calls for integrated and sustained global action, in which the United Nations should play the premier role. It reiterates the appeal of Africa, of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the Organization of the Islamic

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Conference for the holding of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations aimed at swiftly concluding a universally accepted legal instrument on international terrorism.

In Mali, the year 2002 was devoted to the holding, for the third time, of pluralistic, democratic and peaceful elections, at the outcome of which His Excellency Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré assumed the country 's highest post. Those elections are sufficient proof that Mali 's democratic institutions have taken root, and they support the democratic culture of the Malian people.

Here, I must express, on behalf of the people and the Government of Mali, my heartfelt thanks to all our partners for their contribution to the organization, the holding and the success of those elections. Mali is deeply attached to the consolidation of the rule of law, to the preservation of peace and security and to the improvement of the living conditions of populations. In that regard, our conviction remains that we must deepen, promote and respect those values.

For Mali, republican and democratic institutions must be renewed only through democratic institutional mechanisms that have been established in advance. The strengthening of good governance, the consolidation of the democratic process, food security, the improvement of the educational and health systems, the organization and effective functioning of justice, actions to promote children and women, and the fight against poverty and corruption are, inter alia, the challenges to which the new Government of Mali is committed to face.

Likewise, as part of its policy of economic and social development, Mali is working, with the help of its development partners, to implement macroeconomic reforms designed to re-launch the process of growth and development.

Mali is resolutely determined to guarantee individual security in all its dimensions. That why my country is a full-fledged member of the Human Security Network. It fully agrees that there is a need to harmonize efforts with regard to the destruction of anti-personnel landmines and the fight against the illicit trade in and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, with a view to adopting a United Nations programme of action to reduce the human suffering caused by those scourges.

Stability, peace and security are prerequisites for any process of true development in Africa. Despite the significant progress made in resolving certain African conflicts, our continent continues to be faced with a number of ongoing problems, including debt, the continuing fall in the price of raw materials, the democratic deficit, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and difficulties related to humanitarian assistance. Those issues constitute a serious impediment to development efforts in Africa.

Mali welcomes the fact that the long fratricidal conflict in Angola has come to an end and pays a well-deserved tribute to the people and the leaders of Angola for the courage that they have shown and the efforts that they are continuing to make to consolidate peace and bring about national reconciliation.

I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the United Nations for its valuable contribution to the search for a resolution of the Angolan conflict.

I should also like to pay tribute to my compatriot, the late Alioune Blondin Beye, a talented diplomat who was the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Angola from 1994 until the time of his death in June 1998. Alioune Blondin Beye made the supreme sacrifice on behalf of peace in Angola.

The recent signing of a peace agreement between the main parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a further reason for hope. These glimmers of hope for conflict management on the continent will require intense support from the international community, which must provide further support for Africa's efforts through in the form of resources and mechanisms that are capable of providing security and promoting development, stability and peace.

The launching of the African Union, which has replaced the Organization of African Unity, certainly represents the most decisive historic and political event on the African continent this year. The African Union will enable the continent to plan for its future more clearly, take responsibility for its own development, prevent and manage conflict and promote partnership and international cooperation that is better adapted to the expectations of the population.

The recent adoption at Durban of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security

Council of the African Union, a standing decision-making body for conflict management and resolution in Africa, represents an important step forward in the setting up of a collective rapid-reaction security system designed to facilitate an appropriate and effective regional response in dealing with conflict situations and crises in Africa. It is also the appropriate tool to bolster the efforts of the Security Council in fulfilling its main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in particularly in Africa. Mali has already begun to take the necessary measures to ratify that important instrument.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) also deserves ongoing support from the international community. Indeed, NEPAD offers the international community a historic opportunity to establish a credible partnership with Africa — a partnership founded on shared responsibility.

Mali remains deeply concerned about the dramatic developments of the situation in the Middle East. The responsibility of the international community in dealing with that situation remains a commitment aimed at a global, just and lasting peace in the Middle East — a peace founded on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

The creation of a Palestinian State — the central issue of the Middle East question — side by side with Israel, within safe and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), would be the best guarantee of a just and lasting peace in the region.

On a different subject, Mali accords priority to international cooperation on the basis of international law in the search for a lasting solution to conflicts that are of concern to the international community. This principle should apply to the handling of the Iraqi issue.

The creation of the International Criminal Court, whose Statute was adopted in Rome, will not only make it possible to bring to justice those who commit the most serious crimes that infringe on the dignity of the human person, but also will provide an instrument of deterrence that contributes to the maintenance of international peace and security. In this respect, my country would like to reaffirm its full support for the fight against impunity and for full respect for human dignity.

My country would like to appeal to those countries that have still not acceded to the Statute of the International Criminal Court to do so in order to strengthen the legitimacy of that institution.

We are faced with a number of economic problems that are impeding the full growth of several of our States. The globalization of the economy has contributed greatly to a serious imbalance whose chief victims are the developing countries. It has led in particular to the impoverishment of a large number of people, to environmental degradation and to large-scale migration.

External debt is a heavy burden for poor countries. The money used to service the debt has to come from the meagre resources of those countries, which seriously handicaps any attempt to re-launch growth and development. Despite the measures agreed to aimed at alleviating the debt burden for poor countries and allowing access to the markets of the countries of the North, the inequalities persist and poverty continues to worsen.

New measures designed to establish closer links between debt- and poverty-reduction activities should continue. More flexible mechanisms need to be set up, however, in order to mobilize and utilize the resources generated by the application of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. In this respect, it is highly desirable for the developed countries and the international financial institutions to envisage measures capable of enabling the developing countries to move further towards sustainable development and to benefit from globalization. Fulfilling the development objectives set forth in the Millennium Declaration would bring that about.

Mali warmly welcomes United Nations initiatives in support of the least developed countries, as exemplified by the Brussels Programme of Action. My country welcomes the holding in March 2002 at Monterrey of the International Conference on Financing for Development and, more recently, the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The conclusions and recommendations that came out of those two important meetings reflect the determination of the international community to commit itself in a resolute manner to achieving the objectives contained in the Millennium Declaration.

The Government of Mali also encourages institutions and Governments throughout the world to implement the relevant provisions contained in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, since it is true that development policies and strategies intended to reduce poverty must necessarily take account of the problems of ageing.

The democratization and restructuring of the main organs of the United Nations desired by the overwhelming majority of Member States, would greatly contribute to peace and security in the world. In particular, the democratization of the Security Council, whose structure no longer reflects the realities of today's world, would reflect our common determination to make it a more effective, more legitimate and more representative body.

Our peoples are waiting. They are waiting for us to lead them forward towards rebirth in the new century, towards the building of a new world, rich in diversity, more just and more united.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Fathulla Jameel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives.

Mr. Jameel (Maldives): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to join others in congratulating you on your election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. This is not only a recognition of your wisdom and ability to successfully guide the work of this important session, but also a demonstration of the high regard the international community has for your country, the Czech Republic.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea, for the exemplary manner in which he guided the work of the fifty-sixth session.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Switzerland on its admission to the membership of this Organization. We are eagerly looking forward to welcoming the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste into our midst shortly.

Eight days ago, the friendly people of the United States remembered, with profound sorrow, the death and destruction inflicted upon them by murderous acts of terrorism on 11 September 2001. Those brutal and cowardly acts sent waves of deep shock and anger throughout the world. My country was quick to condemn the attacks and to express its solidarity with the people of the United States. We shared their grief, and we extended our sympathies to the American people. Today, with our modest resources, we stand with the international community in the global fight against terrorism and in banishing the scourge of terrorism from the face of the earth.

My country believes that the United Nations, the primary global organization responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, must play the central role in the fight against terrorism. We were encouraged by the swift response of the Security Council, taken under Chapter VII of the Charter, after the horrifying attacks on the United States last year. Total compliance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which details the measures to be taken by the international community in combating terrorism, is of utmost importance. My country also believes that it is essential to strengthen the existing national, regional and international legal framework against terrorism if we are to effectively fight this war. The proposed comprehensive convention on international terrorism and the international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism need to be finalized as soon as possible.

The unprecedented economic ramifications of the events of Nine-Eleven were enormous. Small island developing States like my own have not recovered from the adverse economic effects of the events yet, thus demonstrating the vulnerability of our economies. Our losses were immeasurable. Nonetheless, recent developments in the area of international economic cooperation appear encouraging. The Doha agenda and the Monterrey consensus offer new hope for achieving sustainable development. The transformation of those commitments into concrete action, and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals depends on forging a new form of partnership with shared responsibility between the developing countries and the rest of the world. We expect the developed countries to fulfil their part of the understandings, while the developing countries endeavour to fulfil their obligations.

My country, the Maldives, has made considerable economic strides in the past. With the continued assistance of the international community, we have demonstrated the effectiveness of official development assistance (ODA). It is true that two decades of political stability, and sound social and fiscal policies,

combined with hard work, have improved the standard of living of our people. We are immensely proud of our modest achievements and grateful to those who helped us. Yet, our narrow economic base poses formidable challenges to our desire for continued economic growth.

Globalization and trade liberalization have added new dimensions to our difficulties. The inherent structural weaknesses of our economy convince us that the preferential access to markets and concessional capital we now enjoy as a least developed country have no alternative form of compensation. Quite simply, we cannot sustain our development without these special treatments.

These considerations compel us to strongly resist the call for the graduation of our country from the list of least developed countries. We genuinely believe that the international community should continue assisting us in our quest to overcome the structural constraints impeding our arrival at a level of sustainable growth until we overcome the inherent vulnerabilities of our economy.

The Committee for Development Policy will present its recommendations on the question of graduation of the Maldives from the list of least developed countries to the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in the year 2003. We urge the Committee to complete the necessary groundwork, in accordance with all the relevant Economic and Social Council and General Assembly resolutions, before it gives its views on this very important matter.

A fortnight ago, we met in Johannesburg at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to take stock of our achievements since the Earth Summit in Rio 10 years ago. The facts are disappointing and discouraging. What we have achieved over the past 10 years is far less than what we have not. And, while apathy keeps progress curbed, environmental degradation of the world is continuing unabated. If we are to halt and reverse environmental degradation, we must not only pledge urgent action but also take it. As President Abdul Gayoom of the Republic of Maldives emphasized in his address to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, for sustainable development to happen,

> "Agenda 21 must be implemented. The Kyoto Protocol must be universally honoured. The Barbados Programme of Action must be carried out. The Millennium Development Goals must be reached".

My country, the survival of which is threatened by climate change, therefore remains concerned over inaction and indifference with regard to the implementation of the plans of action for environmental protection and sustainable development.

Turning to another issue, we have been witnessing an unprecedented deterioration of the situation in Palestine and the Middle East. The Israeli Government has killed the peace process and has driven the region to the brink of war. Its acts of aggression and the use of excessive force, coupled with political assassinations, the destruction of vital installations and infrastructure, blockades and economic suffocation of the Palestinian people, are all designed to frustrate the prospects for an independent Palestinian State. We condemn these dastardly actions and call on the international community to persuade Israel to withdraw from all occupied Palestinian territories and to respect all relevant Security Council resolutions. The Maldives has consistently supported the just struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their inalienable rights and to establish an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital.

We believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in bringing the two sides back to the negotiating table. We recognize the efforts of the Quartet, and encourage its members, especially the United States, to remain actively engaged in the search for a just, permanent and lasting peace in the region.

Disarmament and arms control measures should remain a high priority on the international agenda. The international community must unite and act collectively to strengthen and enforce the non-proliferation regimes. The Maldives is party to all major multilateral instruments relating to arms control and disarmament, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We call on those countries that are not party to those instruments to accede to them as soon as possible. Furthermore, my country believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in various parts of the world can contribute immensely to the efforts of the international community in this regard.

As well, we should vigorously pursue our efforts and enforce verifiable measures to rid the world of biological and chemical weapons that can cause mass destruction. My country, therefore, believes that bilateral, regional and multilateral approaches must be reinforced and that they must complement one another if we are to free the world of those deadly weapons. We believe also that, on global issues, there should be a sincere commitment to multilateralism and trust in the multilateral institutions. The United Nations must not only be placed at the centre of multilateral processes, but should remain the principal player responsible for grappling with these important global issues, which have such a great bearing on international peace and security.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the firm commitment of the Maldives to the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We firmly believe that the United Nations requires reform and restructuring. The aim of the reform process should be the enhancement of the credibility, legitimacy and universal character of the Organization. This involves the reform of the Security Council, a new working relationship, and a strong enforcement regime within the United Nations and among its Member States.

Together with other members of the international community, the Maldives will work to uphold and promote the objectives of the United Nations. We remain convinced that the United Nations is the only organization that is capable of creating a more peaceful and prosperous world for humanity.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Irakli Menagarishvili, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Mr. Menagarishvili (Georgia): Allow me to begin by extending my warmest congratulations to you — my colleague Mr. Jan Kavan — on his election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

I cannot but remember the tragedy of 11 September 2001, the anniversary of which we commemorated just a few days ago. That bloody act committed here in New York, the host city of the United Nations Headquarters, was directed not only against the United States but also against all the rest of us, the entire civilized world that the United Nations symbolizes. Georgia has been part of the anti-terrorist coalition from the very first day. I would like to assure the Assembly that Georgia has been doing everything in its power to be a dedicated partner in this struggle and that it will maintain the spirit of cooperation until the very, successful end.

The problem of international terrorism is complex and multidimensional, and I had intended to share our views and thoughts on that. However, the recent complications in Georgian-Russian relations have compelled me to shift the focus of my address. I am referring to the mounting aggressive attacks on my country's sovereignty emanating from the Russian authorities and media. On a daily basis, Georgia is being accused of harbouring terrorists, aiding fighters and fueling the conflict in Chechnya. This is a clear attempt to create an enemy image of Georgia in Russia's public opinion. Here I have to state clearly: this is utter nonsense.

We believe that the pressure exerted on my country under the pretext of these absurd accusations is being used by Russia as a smokescreen to hide its own failure to cope with the conflict in Chechnya. As President Shevardnadze stated in his letter, transmitted by our Permanent Representative in identical letters addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council, "It is hard to imagine a clearer example of confusing the cause and the effect". (*A/57/408, annex*)

The truth is that this tragic chain of events started with the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, in which Chechen fighters, citizens of the Russia Federation, had been initially recruited, trained and sent to fight. Then, all of this boomeranged in the Chechen conflict against Russia, when those fighters turned their arms against their own patrons. As a result of two Chechen wars, Georgia has had to face an influx of thousands of Chechen refugees, and armed gangs of criminals forced into Georgia, followed by insistence from the Russian side on permitting a military operation against them on Georgian soil. All this meant a spillover of the endless and bloody war into Georgia, which we certainly could not allow. We are able to take, and are already taking, all necessary measures to uproot any possibility of the use of our territory by terrorists.

Although it is evident that the problem of the Pankisi Gorge of Georgia is a side effect of the war in Chechnya, and not vice versa, the violations of airspace and attacks against the sovereign territory of Georgia

by Russian military jets and helicopters have acquired a permanent character. The most recent air strike took place on 23 August 2002, causing civilian casualties. Georgia has irrefutable documentary and factual evidence of the attack, which has also been confirmed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe border monitoring operation.

Despite the clear evidence, the Russian military leadership cynically denies these facts, trying to avoid an objective investigation in spite of their official statements that one will be carried out. Moreover, unfolding hysteria in Russia on the issue of the Pankisi Gorge has culminated in statements by Russia's President and its military openly threatening Georgia with aggression. These actions not only gravely endanger peace and security in the region, but also undermine the efforts of the global anti-terrorist coalition to fight against this menace.

What is at stake here is not only the sovereignty and independence of Georgia, but also the very fundamentals of the current international system. That is why we have brought this issue to this high forum.

As I mentioned, Georgian special forces, aided by our friends, are conducting an operation to restore law and order in the Pankisi Gorge and the surrounding area. We already have achieved positive results and are ready to cooperate with all concerned parties, including Russia. Moreover, we are open to all international transparency measures.

We call on the Russian side to reconsider their approach and, as President Shevardnadze stressed in his letter, we appeal "to the leadership of Russia and the President himself to find a common tongue [and] to rise above the existing problems". (*ibid.*) We strongly believe that there is no other way out.

Speaking about the conflicts in the Caucasus, I would like to draw attention to the most painful issue: the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, where our joint efforts have not yet been successful. I believe that the major mistake made by the international organizations was to give the so-called Abkhaz authorities an opportunity to engage them in endless and absurd disputes because of which the bases of the peace process were ignored.

First, there is Georgia, a full-fledged member of the international community, whose internationally recognized territory is being violated by the non-legitimate, pseudo-Abkhaz regime based on hostility and ethnic cleansing. No positive results can be achieved if the two sides are treated in the same manner, if they are viewed as equally responsible and if a policy of pleasing both of them is pursued.

Secondly, there is the fate of the more than 300,000 refugees and internally displaced persons who have been ousted from their homeland and deprived of their basic human rights, and whose prospect of return has for the past eight years failed to go beyond fruitless discussions. The years of ineffective negotiations merit only those conclusions.

I must excuse myself before the authors of the most recent Security Council resolution on this matter, Council resolution 1427 (2002), but I cannot agree with the softness of their statements. Even though the de facto Abkhaz leadership completely ignored and categorically refused to receive the document, "Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi", elaborated by the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, the arrogance of the separatist regime was responded to in the resolution only by a slight reproach.

To our surprise, the most recent report of the Secretary-General, based on information from the United Nations Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, points to "a modest improvement in the human rights situation". (*S/2002/742, para. 23*) It is difficult to understand what kind of improvement is meant when the separatists insist that Georgian children should study Georgian as a foreign language at Georgian schools in Abkhazia, Georgia.

The tragedy in Abkhazia, Georgia, where hundreds of thousands, mostly ethnic Georgians, have been forcibly expelled from their homes, has numerous times been rightfully assessed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as ethnic cleansing. Thus, we can only be astonished that the United Nations is so reluctant to make the same statement. This is the more so as the Abkhaz side has never complied with any of the 28 Security Council resolutions adopted since 1993. I hope members would agree that such inconsistency only strengthens the separatists' self-confidence and increases their belief in their impunity.

In 1994 we made an unprecedented decision by asking the United Nations to permit the commencement of a peacekeeping operation engaging the

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), whereby the "collective" peacekeeping forces included only a Russian military contingent. The reason for this was the complete absence of other alternatives at that time. Regrettably, eight years of this operation have made clear that the Russian peacekeepers, acting under the CIS aegis, fail to ensure the security that is so necessary for the return of the internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes in Abkhazia, Georgia. In fact, the peacekeepers have established an artificial border between the territory controlled by the separatists and the rest of Georgia.

On that basis, we think it is high time to transform substantively the ongoing peacekeeping operation. In particular, we are in favour of introducing a civil police component and creating a joint Georgian-Abkhaz administration in the Gali district under international auspices. Considering the solid United Nations experience in the establishment and management of international police forces, we have high expectations of the Assembly's support.

We strongly believe that more active involvement of the international community, and primarily of the United Nations, is indispensable. We understand that the United Nations is currently involved in several peacekeeping operations. Irrespective of that fact, we hope that some resources can be found to ensure more active United Nations engagement in the resolution of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia.

Speaking about the ineffectiveness of international efforts in resolving the Abkhaz conflict, we should admit that the lack of unanimity within the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General remains a serious impeding factor. That is why it took almost two years just to win consensus on the so-called Boden document. Moreover, we are repeatedly faced with actions by one of the members of the Group that are utterly inconsistent with the general approach.

At the end of 2000, the Russian Federation introduced a visa regime with Georgia. But contrary to the elementary norms of international law, the right to visa-free movement has been maintained for the secessionist regions of Georgia: the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. Numerous protests by the Georgian side against this discriminatory decision have been simply ignored. Moreover, this was followed by the mass issue of Russian passports to the local population of these two separatist regions, and their mass conversion to Russian citizenship through simplified procedures. Here a question arises: how do these actions, named "legal expansion" even by the Russian media, contribute to a peaceful resolution of these conflicts?

I have to reaffirm that a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, remains the only acceptable option for my Government. But as I have already mentioned, regrettably, the Abkhaz side has categorically refused to consider the document that determines the political status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia. Therefore, we have to admit that the entire peace process in Abkhazia, Georgia, is as much in jeopardy as it is in need of drastic changes. We call on the United Nations to address this problem.

Finally, United Nations reform has long been a topic of discussion. It is unfortunate that work in that regard has not progressed beyond an exchange of ideas. Too much time has been devoted to discussions on Security Council enlargement, the increase of the number of its permanent and non-permanent members, the change of procedures related to the right of veto and the adoption of joint decisions. Regrettably, there have been no practical results so far.

Here I would like to stress that Georgia reiterates its full support for the speedy realization of the aforesaid changes. We strongly support granting permanent membership to Germany and Japan, as well as the overall enlargement of the Security Council. We also insist on increased transparency in the work of the Council.

The world community is currently facing numerous challenges which require more decisive and radical steps. And I cherish the hope that this forum will be courageous enough to make them without delay.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency the Honourable Arjon Jung Bahaur Singh, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Nepal.

Mr. Singh (Nepal): Let me begin by taking this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election to preside over the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. My delegation pledges its full support to you and has full confidence in your ability to steer the session to a successful conclusion. I would also like to express my delegation's profound appreciation to your predecessor,

His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo, for the excellent manner in which he guided the fifty-sixth session.

Our tributes are also due to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for his tireless efforts to carry out the mandate of the United Nations.

Nepal congratulates Switzerland and welcomes it as a new Member of the United Nations. We also look forward to having the privilege of welcoming East Timor as a new Member in a few days.

We are meeting here under the long and dark shadow of the terrorist attacks carried out against our host city on 11 September 2001. The trauma and tragedy the attacks wrought are still fresh in our memory. Our heart goes out to the children who lost their parents and to the families who lost their near and dear ones.

Itself a victim of terrorism, Nepal understands the pain and peril terrorists brutally perpetrate on individuals and societies. As globalization and technological advances have made it possible for terrorists to move people and funds across the world with ease, the concerted efforts of nations will be essential to stamp out terrorism. We therefore support the ongoing global war on terrorism and see the need for better enforcement of existing international law and for the conclusion of a comprehensive global convention for that purpose. In Nepal we have enacted a new law in this regard, as well as rules and regulations that include provisions of relevant international treaties to which we are a party.

Being opposed to democracy and freedoms, the so-called Maoist terrorists in Nepal have been taking innocent lives, abducting children to work as child soldiers, and destroying private homes, schools and vital infrastructure. In view of this, His Majesty's Government has recognized them as terrorists and has launched a campaign to protect people and property. We appreciate the moral and financial support from our friends in this effort. We also deplore any suggestion that tends to equate the Government's obligation to protect its citizens with the terrorists' dastardly acts of violence.

Even though terrorism is the menace of the moment, other peace and security problems continue to trouble the world. The Middle East is burning and Africa is boiling over with conflict. Tension also abounds elsewhere — in Asia, Europe and Latin America.

To find comprehensive peace in the Middle East, Nepal supports the time-bound implementation of Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) and of the Quartet agreement of April 2002.

Iraq must comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and the international community must respect the sanctity and integrity of the Charter of the United Nations in order to avoid setting fire to the wider region.

We are happy that Afghanistan is limping back to normalcy. Providing security coverage over the entire country should be the United Nations priority so that reconstruction can pick up momentum.

East Timor has emerged as a free South Pacific nation. We congratulate its people on their freedom and independence, and the United Nations on helping them through the transition.

It is encouraging that Sierra Leone has achieved a measure of stability. In order to achieve a wider peace, attempts must be redoubled to resolve the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Burundi.

The Balkans, Cyprus and the Korean peninsula should receive necessary support in their quest for peace and harmony.

No durable peace will be possible without the prevention of conflicts and the resolution of disputes through peaceful means. Peacekeeping, disarmament and confidence-building are the pillars of the edifice of culture of peace. United Nations peacekeeping operations have proved very useful in helping to stabilize fragile situations during and after conflicts. Nepal is a major player in United Nations peacekeeping and has contributed more than 40,000 military and police personnel so far. Our peacekeepers have served the United Nations with outstanding competence and dedication, sustaining 42 casualties in the line of duty. Our commitment to United Nations peacekeeping operations remains robust. Supplying fully self-sustained troops is our goal, but that often becomes difficult for a poor country. Until we achieve our goal, the United Nations must continue to bridge the resource gap through innovative means.

In our view, the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound manner constitutes the cornerstone of the disarmament endeavour. We also stress the imperative of observing existing international treaties, ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty. Nuclear-weapon-free zones and a guarantee not to use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, and other confidence-building measures will help the process of nuclear disarmament. Equally important is the need to eradicate chemical, biological and other weapons of mass destruction.

Small arms have taken more lives than any other type of weapons. We welcome the agreement that emerged from the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects last year. Nonetheless, we underline the need for stricter controls on the possession of such arms by non-State actors.

United Nations Regional Centres for peace and disarmament are an important tool for building confidence and helping the process of disarmament in their respective regions. We are grateful to Member States for having designated Nepal as host of the Regional Centre in Asia and the Pacific. It is, however, deeply troubling that the Centre is yet to move to Kathmandu, despite our full commitment to meeting all those obligations that other hosts have met. We urge the United Nations to relocate the Centre immediately and not to set terms and conditions over and above those that other hosts of similar Centres have accepted.

One may argue that not all conflicts are products of poverty. Yet people living in poverty, deprivation and despair easily become susceptible to the evil designs of extremist elements. Hence, poverty reduction and sustainable development are an inseparable part of efforts to prevent conflicts and terrorism and to promote peace.

Indeed, developing countries must bear the primary responsibility for their own development. Nepal has undertaken far-reaching reforms to liberalize the economy, optimize internal resources, attract foreign investment and protect the environment. Most of its public expenditure is invested in people and in poor areas. Measures have been taken to provide clean Government and improve overall governance.

However, our problems are so big and our resources so limited that without additional resources and market access we cannot accelerate our growth and sustain our development. Wealthy nations will therefore have to fulfil their commitments made at the Millennium Summit, as well as at the Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg conferences. We appreciate the pledges of the European Union and the United States to raise the level of their development assistance and urge them to keep their word.

Developing countries also need a conducive global economic climate to grow. For that to happen, rich nations must strive to lift the world economy out of the current recession and agree on major reforms in the international financial architecture.

More than others, least developed countries in Africa and elsewhere need increased assistance and support to break loose from their poverty trap. Developed nations should do everything in their power to meet the official development targets, provide duty-free and quota-free access for the products of the least developed countries to their markets and help implement other provisions of the Brussels Programme of Action.

Landlocked developing countries suffer the constraints of remoteness, high-cost economies and high transit costs. They need targeted assistance to overcome their specific hurdles, as do the small and poor island developing States. Nepal appreciates the United Nations for its important role in propelling development in developing countries. We also welcome the timely appointment of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

Regional cooperation is a linchpin of attempts collectively to foster competitiveness, capacity and synergy. In South Asia, we are striving to build such cooperation under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Poverty alleviation, trade liberalization and technical cooperation have received the principal focus as precursors to the ultimate establishment of a South Asian economic union. The eleventh SAARC summit, which Nepal hosted in January, is a testament to member States' eagerness not to let their political differences affect the process of regional economic integration.

Nepal is fully committed to democracy, justice and human rights, including those of women and children. We are strengthening the values and

institutions of democracy and incorporating international human rights standards into our domestic laws. Our National Human Rights Commission is fully functional and the judiciary is being revitalized.

Sadly enough, there are nearly 20 million refugees around the world and many more internally displaced persons. In Nepal alone, there are over 100,000 refugees from Bhutan, deprived of their human rights at home. With a view to finding a durable solution to the problem, Nepal has engaged in bilateral negotiations with Bhutan for nearly a decade now. We call on Bhutan to take the negotiations as a matter of urgency and to pave the way for the earliest repatriation of the refugees.

Friendly countries, the United Nations system — particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme — and non-governmental organizations have been generously assisting us in the maintenance of the refugees. We express our appreciation to them for their help and urge them to continue it until the refugees return home.

Committed to the principles and purposes of the United Nations, Nepal underlines the need for United Nations reform, so that the Organization can meet the challenges before it. Therefore, revitalizing the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council is our priority. We favour reinforcing collaboration and complementarity between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council in their respective and related areas.

In our view, it is imperative to carry out a limited expansion of the Security Council membership in both categories, in a way that preserves the Council's flexibility and ensures equitable geographical representation. Reform of its working methods must also continue, with a view to enhancing transparency and improving the quality of consultations, particularly with troop-contributing countries.

Reform is equally essential within the Secretariat in order to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. Inter-agency coordination should also be upgraded.

Central to strengthening the United Nations are a vigorous Non-aligned Movement and a robust Group of 77. As a member of both, Nepal pledges to work with other countries to reinvigorate those bodies and to expand cooperation between them and the United Nations.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I must remind all the speakers once again that we had agreed at the beginning of the General Assembly to a time limit of 15 minutes. I strongly appeal to all members to reduce their prepared speeches to correspond to the agreed time limit.

I give the floor to Mr. Ali Abdi Farah, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti.

Mr. Farah (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): In a year of frightful tragedy and uncertainty, we were at least fortunate to have the charisma and leadership of Mr. Han Seung-soo, as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We also take this opportunity, Mr. President, to warmly congratulate you. We welcome the admission of the Swiss Confederation to the United Nations family, and we are pleased at the future status of East Timor.

Under the enlightened leadership of Mr. Kofi Annan, the United Nations has rediscovered its relevance and its credibility. The reform measures he has implemented in recent years have enabled better coordination, better information-sharing, strengthened cohesion and a stronger strategic direction. Today the United Nations is working more and more closely with civil society to fight disease, address the challenges of poverty and respond to humanitarian crises. The Organization has also built a meaningful partnership with private sector enterprises, aimed at having developing countries benefit from their expertise and resources.

In that regard, the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Social Development, held in Johannesburg, have highlighted the unprecedented collaboration of various decision-makers, such as the United Nations, Governments, the private sector, international financial institutions and civil society.

Last week, during numerous commemorative ceremonies marking the horrible events of 11 September 2001, it was obvious that the world had been left traumatized. The reverberations of 11 September are still palpable throughout the United Nations system and the world. Indeed, within less than 24 hours, the Security Council took decisive action,

declaring that the 11 September attacks posed a threat to international peace and security. The important resolution on the fight against terrorism, Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), established a general procedure for verifying that every country is implementing the relevant provisions of the resolution, in order to eradicate that scourge.

Our resolve and determination to fight the threat of terrorism has undoubtedly been strengthened. The event itself alerted us to understanding and perceiving certain basic truths: human vulnerability and interdependence, the mobilization of a real international coalition in a short time, if need be, and our common resolve to eradicate the criminals who take innocent life, regardless of nationality, religion, sex and colour.

Presiding over the official ceremonies marking the anniversary at the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, said that:

> "Everything that we work for — peace, development, health, freedom — is damaged by this horror. Everything that we believe in — respect for human life, justice, tolerance, pluralism and democracy — is threatened by it. It must be defeated — and it must be defeated by a world acting as one." (*SG/SM/8376, para. 7*)

Therefore, combating terrorism requires more aggressive law enforcement measures everywhere.

In order to eradicate that horror, almost all countries have initiated an extraordinary series of actions, which have converged towards a complete reorientation of their policies, and particularly their foreign policies.

We have witnessed countries pursuing policies to reach out to others, to strengthen ties, to share global visions and to forge new strategic alliances. There is no doubt that the events of 11 September 2001 have led to the forming of new alliances and the strengthening of existing ones. However, it should not be a surprise that this has also generated stricter controls on the movements of people, particularly people of certain religions, backgrounds, complexions and regions. There is no doubt that we are living in a dangerous world in which vigilance is called for. However, while taking all that into account, let us be careful not to debase our grief for the victims and their families. As an editorial in a well respected newspaper stated:

> "What happened a year ago was terrible, but our shock and our respect for the suffering of those left behind should not cloud our judgement about unrelated issues". (The Independent, *11 September 2002*)

In the Secretary-General's words of 11 September 2002, on the first anniversary of that unspeakable tragedy:

> "Today, we come together as a world community because we were attacked as a world community.
>
> "...
>
> "May the memory of those who perished on 11 September serve to inspire a better, more just, more peaceful world for all of us". (*Press release SG/SM/8376*)

We hope that reason will prevail over fear, prejudice and hatred.

We welcome President Bush's commitment to explore fully the route of the Security Council in finding a way to draw Iraq towards a peaceful settlement of the outstanding issues. We also welcome Iraq's unconditional agreement to the return of the United Nations inspectors. That demonstrates its readiness and full cooperation in the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. It is, indeed, an encouraging development. We must dedicate ourselves to seeking a political solution within the framework of the United Nations. And the United Nations must act, and act very quickly, to put an end to the acute crisis which threatens to engulf an entire region and which could have an impact on the whole world. We all know the consequences of this crisis. Let us join together and work with determination to save the region, which is already in turmoil, from further conflict.

One of the gravest yet often overlooked threats to world peace is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Republic of Djibouti agrees with the Secretary-General that the route to peace in the Middle East was laid out decades ago in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), and, recently, in resolution 1397 (2002), which stipulated the conditions of land for peace, an end to terror and to occupation and two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. Unfortunately, the focus has been shifted again by demands for a leadership change in the Palestinian Authority and for

political and security reforms, while simultaneously easing Israel's obligation to return to the negotiating table. The so-called sequential approach has always failed. It is urgent to move forward on all the issues, comprehensively and simultaneously.

To the political impasse should be added the economic destruction that has resulted from the insurmountable checkpoints, roadblocks, repeated incursions and the demolition of buildings and supply networks. The Palestinian people are in danger; a whole nation is virtually living in a prison. There is a growing, unprecedented humanitarian crisis, as stressed by a number of recent reports, describing in detail the levels of malnutrition, the drop-off in child immunization programmes, the increased risk of communicable diseases and runaway, endemic poverty. We remain steadfast in our condemnation of the violence and the killing of innocent civilians, whether they be Palestinians or Israelis. In this context, we welcome the latest plan of the Quartet, which outlines a three-phase road map to a comprehensive final settlement within a three-year period ending in 2005. To complete the process of bringing peace to the Middle East, Syria and Israel must reach an agreement on Israel's withdrawal to the borders of 1967.

A decade ago, the United Nations Conference on Climate and Development, held at Rio in 1992, gave us Agenda 21, which contains pertinent recommendations for lessening our wasteful consumer habits, protecting the atmosphere and the oceans, promoting sustainable agriculture and combating poverty. The subsequent thematic conferences further strengthened and broadened those recommendations, which have led to the promises set out in the Millennium Declaration, particularly on alleviating endemic and severe poverty. The goals, targets, commitments and deadlines for reducing poverty provide a new, decisive impetus. The recent World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, made important and significant progress on crucial issues facing humankind today.

All those demonstrations of goodwill, however, need to be backed by concrete action. Speaking on behalf of the European Union during this General Assembly debate, the Prime Minister of Denmark expressed that sentiment:

> "At Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg, we reached consensus on what needs to be done. But knowing what has to be done is not enough. As world leaders, we must see that it is done". (*A/57/PV.2*)

In an increasingly demanding world, more and more references are made to good governance, investment in human capital and economic freedom as conditions for developing countries to qualify for development assistance. For its part, Africa has acknowledged to its partners the need to enhance the continent's responsibility in all areas of concern, including peace, stability, democracy, human rights and development. Through the New Partnership for Africa's Development, Africa has shown that it is able to shoulder greater collective responsibility in resolving its conflicts and in its development. In return, Africa keenly hopes that the financial constraints that have seriously hindered development and human dignity will be duly taken into account by our partners.

The issue of HIV/AIDS is one of the major concerns of our continent. More than 30 million people are infected in the world, and 75 per cent of those are Africans. The impact on development is disastrous. Life expectancy has decreased in some countries. Remarks made by the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS are very clear:

> "If people are not alive, if people are not healthy — the people who are supposed to bring us sustainable development — then it won't happen. AIDS is a major crisis of human resources."

Based on the outcome of the peace and reconciliation conference held at Arta, Djibouti, our subregional organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), is working to organize a conference to bring together the national transition Government and other parties in Somalia — the regional administrations, factions and groups that opted to stay away from that historic meeting. The front-line States, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, were mandated by the Ninth IGAD Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in January, to bring all of the components together with a view to completing the Arta process and thus paving the way for the emergence of a broad-based Government. Much has been accomplished, but it is fair to state that an enormous amount remains to be done.

The Republic of Djibouti believes that a realistic road map, consistent with current thinking is a capital

necessity. The majority view of the international community — including the United Nations, the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, IGAD and the European Union — is that the Arta peace process remains the most viable basis for peace and national reconciliation in Somalia. There has been a willingness to complete, without preconditions, the Arta peace and reconciliation process. Without ambiguity, the international community has consistently called for dialogue involving the national transition Government and the other parties, in a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance, with a view to establishing an inclusive Government in Somalia based on power sharing through a democratic process. Those are cardinal principles that should keep us on the right path. We cannot permit ourselves to stray from them.

Decisions related to the maintenance of international peace and security lie with the Security Council, which, despite the exponential increase of United Nations membership over the past three decades, has singularly remained an unrepresentative body. If confidence is to be placed in its decisions, there must also be an expansion in both the permanent and the non-permanent member categories, giving both developed and developing countries the opportunity to become permanent members. The Working Group charged with studying that issue has thus far failed to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, and we see no clear prospect of the impasse being broken soon. More objectivity and clarity of vision are required in order to bring about that vital necessity.

Over the past decades, the people of the Horn of Africa have had their share of difficulties and suffering, and we are anxious to see peace, development and a reduction in conflict. For its part, my country, the Republic of Djibouti, is firmly convinced of the merit of good-neighbourly relations, cooperation and the creation of opportunities for the benefit of our peoples. We are resolutely committed to work hand in hand with our international partners in general, and with our friends in the region in particular, to resolve all outstanding issues that compromise trust and harmony.

The President: Once again, I appeal to Members to keep to the agreed time limit and to pay attention to the light on the speaker's table.

The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Youssouf Ouédraogo, Minister of State, Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Ouédraogo (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): As is the case every year, Burkina Faso is very pleased to take part in the regular session of the General Assembly, this great meeting of peoples united by the same destiny and motivated by the same ideal: to build a world of justice, love and peace. I am convinced, Mr. President, that the choice of a person of your great ability to preside over this fifty-seventh session will help us greatly. As we congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on that special honour, my delegation and I want to assure you of our full availability and cooperation for the success of your mission. We also want to express again our profound recognition of your predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for the competence with which he presided over the fifty-sixth session.

The quest for peace and security and the promotion of cooperation and development are the essential values that presided over the creation of the United Nations. Today, more than ever before, with the tragic events of 11 September 2001 — whose first anniversary we have just commemorated — those objectives have assumed a more immediate and urgent character, because world peace finds itself seriously threatened, in particular by international terrorism. We must all convince ourselves that the best response to international terrorism must proceed from collective action — in other words, from action by the entire international community.

As a member of that community, Burkina Faso — which has made the quest for peace a creed — reaffirms most solemnly, vigorously and unambiguously its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, whatever the motivations. Our determination to fight alongside the United Nations against that danger is unwavering, and our implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) was the subject of a report submitted to the Committee established pursuant to that resolution.

If the fight against terrorism henceforth occupies the spotlight, that must not obscure the imperative necessity of finding just and lasting solutions to international crises, particularly regional conflicts that so often feed and maintain that scourge. In this

connection, Burkina Faso welcomes the laudable initiatives of the United Nations to restore peace to many regions of the world, particularly Africa, where United Nations interventions — coupled with the initiatives of the Organization of African Unity, which has become the African Union, and those of the African subregional organizations — have made it possible to pacify many areas of tension and conflict that were ravaging parts of our continent.

We also welcome the gradual return to peace in Sierra Leone, in Angola, in the Great Lakes region, between Ethiopia and Eritrea and in Sudan, even if in the latter case we must regret the suspension of the agreement between the Government of that country and the armed rebellion.

In Western Africa, the hopes that arose at the end of the war in Sierra Leone unfortunately seem unfulfilled with the resumption of combat in neighbouring Liberia.

We cannot remain passive in the face of civil war in that sister country. Supported by others of goodwill and working within the framework of the process of the Economic Community of West African States, Burkina Faso convened a meeting in Ouagadougou from 8 to 11 July between a number of Liberian political parties, civil society organizations, associations and movements with a view to renewing the inter-Liberian dialogue. By agreeing to host that important meeting, my country, Burkina Faso, hoped to provide a further chance for dialogue, which the Liberians themselves desired. The initiative was supportive of efforts that had already been agreed upon in the context of the Rabat process and the Mano River Union.

This year has been particularly bloody in the Middle East. We cannot forget the excesses committed in Jenin and the harassment of President Arafat at Ramallah. The atrocities perpetrated every day against the unarmed Palestinian civilian population are a great cause for concern. Dialogue and negotiation must prevail over confrontation and violence. Burkina Faso reaffirms its support for the creation of an independent Palestinian State, existing side by side with Israel, and we strongly urge the Security Council to ensure that its relevant resolutions are implemented.

With regard to Iraq, Burkina Faso welcomes the fact that reason has prevailed. We remain convinced that unilateral preventive action that is not authorized by the Security Council would have dire consequences for world peace. In that connection, we would like to pay tribute to the courageous decision of the Iraqi Government, which has just agreed to the return to Baghdad of United Nations weapons inspectors. We earnestly hope that that approach will ultimately lead to a definitive resolution of the crisis, especially since the sanctions imposed on that country are unjust and have made martyrs of the Iraqi people.

Burkina Faso has always made it clear that, apart from their unjust character, sanctions cannot properly resolve substantive problems but are counterproductive. We therefore request the lifting of all sanctions against Iraq, Cuba and Iran, as well as those imposed on Libya in connection with the Lockerbie question.

With regard to that latter question, Burkina Faso believes that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has fully discharged its obligations to the Security Council and that the sanctions imposed on it should now be lifted.

As a result of the demands of globalization, protecting the right to development has become the most important obligation for our countries. We therefore place great hope in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to which the Assembly has just devoted a special debate. We should recall that that new initiative shows how determined African leaders are to work tirelessly to rid the continent of poverty and marginalization.

During a recent forum that took place in Ouagadougou on the role of the private sector in the implementation of NEPAD, President Blaise Compaore stressed two major responsibilities that are incumbent upon the international community. The first relates to the enhancement and structural reform of official development assistance so as to adapt it to the needs of its beneficiaries and to improve its effect on their standard of living. The second relates to the problem of the access of African goods to the markets of the industrialized countries and the need to put an end to anti-competitive subsidies that run counter to the rules of the World Trade Organization.

More generally, the various meetings on development that have taken place this year, in particular the International Conference on Financing for Development, held at Monterrey, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held at Johannesburg, as well as the commitments set out in

the Millennium Declaration, open up new and encouraging prospects for developing countries.

It remains true, however, that the best form of development is that which takes into account the requirements of democracy and human rights. In this connection, I would like to assure the Assembly that my country will be resolute in ensuring that democracy becomes rooted in our political and institutional life, and we are taking significant and concrete actions to that end. The people of Burkina Faso have thus just renewed, for a third consecutive time and for a further five years, the mandate of the National Assembly. That election, in which all the political parties took part, took place in a calm, transparent and fair manner and has seated members of 13 political parties to legislate on questions of interest to the people of Burkina Faso.

The Government has also created a Ministry for the Promotion of Human Rights to ensure respect for and the implementation of human rights in all their aspects. That is why my Government welcomes the election of Burkina Faso to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which will enable us to make a positive and active contribution to the work and the deliberations of that international body, which monitors the implementation of human rights throughout the world. Furthermore, our Government is determined to greatly enhance the status of women and children in line with the recommendations of the special session of the General Assembly on children.

It is thus clear that the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations is increasing on a daily basis, whether with regard to the promotion of peace and security, to economic cooperation or to activities in the social and humanitarian sphere.

The recent admission of Switzerland to the United Nations and the forthcoming admission of Timor-Leste further confirm the irreplaceable role of the United Nations as an means of ensuring international stability. It is precisely because of that universality that Burkina Faso is able to call upon the international community to consider the return of the Republic of China to this world Organization. Taiwan has clearly shown that it is a free, independent, democratic nation that enjoys all the attributes of a State under international law and that would thus be able to make a truly useful contribution to the building of a better future for humankind. The credibility of the United Nations is at stake in this respect.

In conclusion, I should like, on behalf of my country, to pay tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan for his assured leadership of this Organization, as well as to the staff of the United Nations for their tireless contribution to the quest for peace.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Kamilov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan on his election as President for the current session of the General Assembly. I would also like to express appreciation to Mr. Han Seung-soo for his excellent organization of the work of the previous session of the General Assembly.

A year ago the world confronted acts of terror, unprecedented in scale and barbarity. We all remember the 11 September 2001 events in the United States and mourn the lives lost.

The events of last autumn, first of all, show that security threats are taking on new and dangerous forms. The phenomenon of terrorism has become more complex. At the current stage the world has to contend with organized international terrorism.

The United Nations devotes much attention to the fight against international terrorism. We welcome the United Nations Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which stipulates the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to coordinate and increase the efficiency of the international community's efforts to fight this most dangerous threat of the twenty-first century.

I would like to recall in this regard that Uzbekistan strongly urged establishment of such a committee within the United Nations as early as 1999.

Uzbekistan is one of the few countries that are parties to all twelve conventions on combating terrorism. We sincerely hope that the appeal by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the United Nations Member States to join and ratify these documents will be followed and put into practice.

Uzbekistan supports the international counter-terrorism coalition as a matter of principle and stands ready to make its contribution to enhance global and regional stability.

The events of 11 September made the world face up to the situation in Afghanistan and, one can say, opened the eyes of the international community to the fact that terrorism has no borders and only through joint efforts we can defeat this perilous challenge to humanity. In a strict and, I would say, categorical way the events of 11 September reminded everybody that twenty years of war turned Afghanistan into a breeding ground and hotbed of international terrorism that threatened not only neighbouring countries and nations, but all of humanity.

We are gratified today by the positive developments in that country; we welcome the convening of the Loya Jirga, and the transitional Government led by President Hâmid Karzai.

At the same time, despite the successful completion of the military phase of the counter-terrorist operation in Afghanistan, today there can be no room for complacency.

First, huge amounts of weapons accumulated during the long years of war in Afghanistan still remain in the possession of armed groups there. In this context there can be no justification for the attempts of certain States to supply ever more weapons to this long-suffering land.

To ensure stability and prevent military confrontation it is important to resolve the problems related to the reduction and collection of the huge amounts of weapons accumulated in Afghanistan. Clearing the Afghan territory of weapons arsenals belonging to criminal groups will also reinforce the activities of the United Nations and regional institutions to thwart the illicit arms trade.

Secondly, the post-war dislocation, economic disaster, as well as the lack of resources to rebuild Afghanistan, may become a catalyst for social unrest that could be used by certain armed groups inside and beyond Afghanistan to create a new round of military confrontation.

Thirdly, there are still various groups in the territory of Afghanistan, including remnants of the Taliban, that are capable of conducting subversive actions and guerrilla warfare. Confrontation continues among various warlord-leaders of different ethnic groups.

Fourthly, the situation on drug trafficking remains almost unchanged. Afghanistan is still the world's main supplier of opium and heroin. According to many international experts, the removal of the Taliban regime does not yet mean the elimination of the criminal narcotics business in Afghanistan. Today the whole world is seriously concerned about this problem. There is an urgent need for adequate measures and assistance on the part of the entire international community, as well as the active support of the Afghan authorities to combat narco-aggression.

The number of drug addicts in the world runs into the hundreds of millions of people. Proliferation of drug addiction undermines both the health of living generations and the gene pool of nations. This affects people in both the developed and developing countries. The Republic of Uzbekistan, making great efforts to fight drug production, abuse and trafficking, fully supports the measures undertaken by the United Nations and the international community to confront these threats.

I would like to underline that it is much easier and more effective to fight drug trafficking at the source. Therefore, we have to block the huge flow of the Afghan drugs right at the borders of the Central Asian States, rather than hunt for grammes and kilogrammes in Europe and other developed countries.

In this regard, it is advisable to shift from numerous counter-narcotics programmes of small efficiency to the concrete solution of this acute problem by allocating the United Nations-controlled resources and means to nip the narcotics trafficking at the source.

Today the attention of the entire international community is riveted on the issue of Iraq. In this regard we support the statement of United States President George Bush delivered in the United Nations from this very rostrum.

The measures towards resolution of the current situation proposed by the President of the United States deserve thorough consideration and may be taken as a basis for the elaboration of the position to be taken by the United Nations Security Council.

Uzbekistan attaches great significance to the strengthening of the global process of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Our country has already received credit for its activity in this field. The strategy of Uzbekistan in ensuring security is based on the country's participation in the United Nations-led

processes of disarmament and arms control and reduction.

Uzbekistan fully supports the principle of indivisibility of security and in this context, as an initiator of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, acknowledges responsibility for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and takes active part in the elaboration process of international instruments in this field.

Uzbekistan proposes to sign the practically finalized and agreed draft of the document on the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia in Kazakhstan in the city of Semipalatinsk, the former site for hundreds of nuclear tests, in the presence of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan during his upcoming visit to the Central Asian region.

The Republic of Uzbekistan supports proposals made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the United Nations reforms. This is necessary for an appropriate adaptation of this Organisation to the dynamic changes in the international arena. Uzbekistan is one of those States that considers the United Nations Security Council reforms to be part of the evolution of the entire United Nations system.

The current structure of the Security Council reflects the realities of a past era. The world has changed since then. We believe that Japan and Germany have a legitimate right to permanent membership in the Security Council. All necessary grounds for this are present.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that it has been ten years since Uzbekistan became a United Nations Member, and it is very gratifying to see the United Nations family expanding. We congratulate Switzerland and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on their decision to become fully-fledged parties to the multilateral cooperation and dialogue of the United Nations. It should mean that the idea of peace and noble principles of the global security system are the order of the day.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Rwanda, His Excellency Mr. André Bumaya.

Mr. Bumaya (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf to congratulate you wholeheartedly on your election as President of this session of the General Assembly. As testimony to the esteem enjoyed by you and your country, Sir, you may rest assured of the support of the Rwanda delegation in carrying out your tasks.

I should like to take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor for the effective way in which he guided our work during the fifty-sixth session.

I should also like, on behalf of my Government, to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his tireless efforts to ensure the effective and transparent functioning of the United Nations and to promote world peace.

The Government of Rwanda warmly welcomes the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and the Swiss Confederation to the United Nations. We are already familiar with their contribution to the enhancement of the role of our great United Nations family, especially their respect for the principles of equal rights and the right of peoples to self-determination.

In this connection, the Government of Rwanda appeals for appropriate measures to be taken to ensure a fair and lasting settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Organization. Furthermore, the Government of Rwanda reiterates its hope that peace will be achieved in the Middle East — a peace that guarantees the creation of a secure Palestinian State with recognized boundaries, coexisting peacefully with the State of Israel, whose security should also be guaranteed.

I should like to recall that, with the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the ideological war often referred to as the cold war, the world entered a new era, with a new economic order. Despite the existence of hotbeds of violence in a number of areas on all continents, we welcome and encourage initiatives designed to resolve the tensions created during the cold war. In that connection, the Rwandan Government encourages talks between North and South Korea. We hope that the two parties will move forward towards the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. The Rwandan Government also supports the principle of one China. The question of Taiwan is an internal matter for China and can be effectively resolved out of the context of the ideological war that gave rise to it, in accordance with the principle, already accepted by the Chinese themselves, of one country and two systems.

This session of the General Assembly is being held one year after the terrible events of 11 September 2001. The terrorist attack perpetrated against the United States remains deeply etched in the memory of the people of Rwanda, and I would like to reiterate our solidarity with the American people. I do so with good reason: perhaps I should recall that, since 1994, Rwanda has been living under the perpetual threat of terrorist groups based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the most active of which is known as the Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALIR), an organization made up of elements of the former Rwandan Army (ex-FAR) forces and Interahamwe militias that were responsible for the 1994 genocide. The leaders of ALIR were among those who planned and carried out the genocide in Rwanda. Since 1994 such elements have attacked Rwanda on many occasions, carrying out the targeted killing of innocent people and destroying social and economic infrastructure of national and international significance. It was such elements that savagely massacred American, British and New Zealand tourists in the Bwindi park in March 1999.

Mr. Mamba (Swaziland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Now, in an attempt to mislead international public opinion and escape justice, the members of this terrorist group are endeavouring to organize themselves into political groups using a number of different labels. The Government of Rwanda therefore appeals to the United Nations and its Member States to take the necessary measures to track down and arrest all those responsible for the Rwanda genocide who are now members of ALIR and to bring them to international justice. We also appeal to the United Nations and its Member States to formally condemn those countries that finance, harbour or lend moral, material or logistical support to the ALIR terrorist organization.

With regard to the prosecution of those accused of the Rwandan genocide, I reiterate the appeal of the Rwandan Government to the international community to ensure the effectiveness and credibility of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda so that it can truly fulfil the expectations of the people of Rwanda and all justice-loving people. In this connection, special attention should be paid to the recommendations on this subject submitted by my Government to the Security Council. Furthermore, the time has come for the international community to ensure the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the report on the Rwanda genocide that was drafted under United Nations auspices, known as the Carlsson report.

With regard to the destabilizing effects of the terrorist activities of ALIR, I should like to advocate as a remedy that support be given to the Lusaka and Pretoria Agreements, which are designed to restore peace in the Great Lakes region. Those two Agreements provide for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation of what are known as the negative forces that are operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which include ex-FAR forces and Interahamwe. The Rwandan Government appeals as a matter of urgency to the United Nations and its Member States to spare no effort in strongly supporting the implementation of those Agreements.

As for Rwanda, it has done its utmost to implement those Agreements and to work to re-establish a genuine and lasting peace in the Great Lakes region. In accordance with the statement made by Paul Kagame, President of the Rwandese Republic, on 13 September during a meeting of the Security Council on the question of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I would like to take this opportunity to announce that, on 17 September, my Government began to withdraw its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in conformity with the provisions of the Pretoria Accord.

My Government is convinced that the implementation of those Agreements will lead us not only to the restoration of security and stability in our subregion, but also to the establishment of a climate of confidence and good cooperative relations that will facilitate common actions in our struggle against the terrorist activities orchestrated by ALIR or by any other terrorist organization.

In this connection, I would like reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Rwanda to cooperate fully to achieve the success of any initiative designed to prevent and repress terrorism in all its forms. In this connection, and in implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), our Government has now ratified all the various international instruments to combat terrorism that we had not signed or ratified previously, in addition to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention on

the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, which we had already ratified. Rwanda has just submitted its first report to the Security Council Committee established to follow up the implementation of that resolution. Rwanda is resolutely determined to combat terrorism, source of desolation and instability for the international community. We believe that the international community should mobilize all of its means to fight and to put an end to poverty, which affects so much of our population. It should do more for the eradication of injustice and inequality in order to ensure a better world for future generations. Thus, we call for the strengthening of the United Nations and the entire United Nations system to ensure the implementation of all of the international commitments to help poor countries. Commitments, such as those expressed in the Millennium Declaration, in the Monterrey Consensus and at the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development, should be reflected in concrete actions without delay. Third-world countries, especially countries of Africa, set great store by this.

In Africa, we would like to root out the causes of poverty. We have already grasped the different aspects of the situation and decided upon a framework to guide us in this long struggle against poverty, namely the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Within NEPAD, we have pledged to put an end to fratricidal wars that devastate our already moribund economies. We have pledged also to work towards democracy, good governance, and for letting the rule of law prevail.

The international community is hereby called upon to assist us in this process. We ask each of the rich countries to reexamine its positions regarding the terms that are often linked to various interventions aimed at helping poor countries, particularly as regards the debt and official development assistance (ODA). This needs to be done in order to enable these countries to confront effectively the various scourges that threaten them, including famine, pandemic diseases, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and so forth, so that they can eventually catch up with the rich countries. Hence, globalization will become profitable for the whole of mankind.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, Mr. Agba Otikpo Mezode.

Mr. Mezode (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): The fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly is being held one year after the terrible terrorist attack of 11 September 2001. The delegation of the Central African Republic still intimately feels the strong emotion caused by that attack against liberty and democracy.

The President of the Republic, the head of State, His Excellency Ange-Félix Patassé, leading the delegation of the Central African Republic to the commemoration, wanted to reiterate his friendly sympathy towards the American Government and people, and to reassert the firm determination of his country to do everything that is necessary in order to contribute effectively to the legitimate international crusade against all forms of terrorism. Our work is starting within a particular context in the history of international relations, because never has humanity been so conscious of the need to confirm its cohesion in order to ensure a world of concord, solidarity and peace.

Before expanding on those facts, Mr. President, I would like to express to Mr. Jan Kavan and the members of the Bureau our warm congratulations on his election to the presidency of this session. His rich experience, as a great statesman and diplomat, will ensure the success of our work. That work will benefit from the full cooperation of the delegation of the Central African Republic. I take this opportunity also to express our admiration for his eminent predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for the skill and competence with which he carried out his responsibilities.

The determination with which the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Kofi Annan, is working, under all circumstances, to make the principles and ideals of the United Nations prevail, once more elicits our admiration. The President of the Republic, the people and the Government of the Central African Republic, want hereby to assure you of their support and reiterate their deep gratitude for all the objective reports on the situation in the Central African Republic.

Moreover, the entry of the Swiss Confederation to the United Nations, and soon the entry of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, are evidence of the resolute march of our Organization towards universality. The Central African Republic wishes to welcome Switzerland and hopes to cooperate closely

with that country within the framework of the United Nations.

Two years ago, 189 Member States met in this very hall. They set objectives for development for the Millennium, such as the reduction of extreme poverty, education for all, promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health, fight against HIV/AIDS and other diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis, preservation of a sustainable environment and the establishment of a world partnership for development. All States unanimously pledged, through multilateral cooperation, to implement what is called the Millennium Declaration in order to achieve those objectives within 15 years.

The findings we made at the Millennium Summit on the state of the world at that time showed serious shortcomings with regard to our will to fulfil collectively the ideals bequeathed to us by the founding fathers of our Organization. However, through that same will, we undertook, in the Millennium Declaration, to re-examine these issues so as to set a course for the world that corresponds to the aspirations and expectations of the people.

However, this is far from what has happened. The revolution in information and communications, the progress of science and technology, the liberalization of trade and the disappearance of State frontiers, while accentuating the phenomenon of globalization, have at the same time led the world into an uncertain and unforeseeable future, to the point where the world today is threatened in the short term with imbalance.

States should fully explore all the potential offered by multilateral cooperation within the framework of the United Nations, particularly to put a stop to such threats. These threats, according to our delegation, are essentially of four kinds.

The first of these, as you can expect, is the threat that changed the world in one hour. It is called terrorism. This diffuse form of organized trans-border crime that foils armies, however powerful they may be, cannot be tolerated. The reaction of the international community to this new form of aggression must be sustained by adhering to resolutions firmly condemning such actions, and by observing a certain attitude towards the countries and institutions that tolerate their authors. Thus, all together, through solidarity and multilateral cooperation, we shall conquer terrorism, whether committed by a State or a small group.

The destruction of the environment, which threatens our future, is also a real threat. We should strive for the sustainable preservation of forests, fauna and biodiversity for the benefit of present and future generations. This subject was eloquently analysed at the Summit on Sustainable Development, held recently in Johannesburg. My delegation has no doubt that international solidarity can here too be of help to safeguard nature. We should like on this occasion to express our gratitude for the American initiative, supported by the international community, for the protection of the Congo basin, of which the Central African Republic is a member.

There is one threat, which does not need to be named because it is so obvious, and that is poverty, which — far from declining — has grown over the years. The Declaration talks about reducing poverty, but must we not first stop manufacturing it? Famine, endemic disease, HIV/AIDS and malaria are the daily lot of the two thirds of humankind living on barely $1 a day. How can we fail to be moved by this? That fringe of humanity calls merely for the solidarity that will allow it to live in conditions worthy of our civilization.

In the face of the drying up of official development assistance, and with respect to the failure of certain development initiatives, the African countries have felt that we need to develop some sort of partnership with the countries of the North. They have therefore proposed an original plan for the development of Africa through the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The delegation of the Central African Republic fervently calls for the worldwide support of the international community for the implementation of the plan.

The many challenges defined at the Millennium Summit in terms of goals to be attained, along with the new plan for African development, will have no chance of success unless they are fostered in an environment of peace, security and stability. However, current conditions do not give much cause for optimism, although we note the occasional positive movement towards the settlement of a few conflicts. Regional crises remain, however, that are no less threatening to peace.

Faithful to its doctrine, the Central African Republic believes that the situation in the Middle East

can be settled only through the strict implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on this subject. It deplores the escalation of violence in that region.

In the context of its own regional and subregional sphere, the Central African Republic highly appreciates the latest developments in the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular the signing of the Pretoria peace agreement with Rwanda and the disengagement agreement signed with Uganda.

In conclusion, I am compelled to note that my country, the Central African Republic, is the victim of international ostracism and of indifference that borders on contempt. How else is one to understand the silence of the international community and the international financial institutions in the face of calls for intervention and of Security Council resolutions following on the reports of the Secretary-General since the notorious date of 20 May 2000, and despite the appeals of the Organization of African Unity — now the African Union — the Community of Sahel-Saharan States and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community? And yet, our country has come a very long way with respect to good governance — that fetishistic word! — in politics, economics and finance. As of early 2002, the reduction of corruption is no longer a figment of the imagination, as evinced by the action undertaken in our financial offices.

My country's situation requires me to call attention to the words of the Algerian writer Kateb Yassin:

> "Our blood must become enflamed and we must catch fire in order to move the spectators. May the world open its eyes not to our mortal remains, but to the wounds of the survivors."

The sustainable development we all dream of will become a reality only if, here and now, we inject solidarity into international relations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Chairman of the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Mr. Fawzi Bin Abdul Majeed Shobokshi.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to deliver the statement of the Government of Saudi Arabia on behalf of His Royal Highness the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

It gives me great pleasure at the outset of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly to convey to Mr. Kavan personally and to his friendly country, the Czech Republic, our sincerest congratulations on his election to the important position of President of the Assembly. We are confident that he will preside with great skill and efficiency over our deliberations.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, who presided over the last session with wisdom and experience and deserves our gratitude and appreciation. I also wish to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his tireless efforts to achieve peace and consolidate security throughout the world and for his persistent efforts to strengthen the Organization's role and enhance its efficiency.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that the recent admission of Switzerland to membership of this Organization will enrich the United Nations and undoubtedly enhance its role, given that country's remarkable contributions to and experience in international cooperation.

Our current session coincides with the first anniversary of the horrendous disaster that befell the United States of America as a result of a most despicable act of terrorism that led to the death of thousands of innocent lives, with enormous material losses and immeasurable harm from which we are all still suffering. The pain and suffering of the American people over the loss of their relatives and loved ones as a result of this cowardly act was our loss, too, as we witnessed those events in a state of total shock and dismay. We felt nothing but absolute condemnation for those who committed that utterly criminal and barbaric act.

I therefore convey our sincerest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the President of the United States, to the families of the victims and to the American people. I assure them that this horrible experience can only strengthen what we already know about the inner strength and pride of the American people. Those feelings of fortitude and resolve, as well as their determination to confront this challenge and to move on with resolve, guided by the principles and values of the founding fathers of their great nation, were unmistakable when we, along with the American

people and President, commemorated the first anniversary of the tragedy.

It was most overwhelmingly painful for us to see a number of our young people, who were in a position to contribute beneficially to the development and well-being of their own country, fall victim to those who led them astray as they embarked on a road that ended tragically. Those young men committed a grave offense against their country and their religion, which totally and utterly forbids the crime they committed.

May I be permitted here to quote from the letter sent to United States President George W. Bush by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah, in describing those young men in a most unambiguous and meaningful manner:

> "We in Saudi Arabia felt especially acute pain at the realization that a number of young Saudi citizens had been enticed and deluded and their reasoning subverted to the degree of denying the tolerance that their religion embraced and turning their backs on their homeland, which has always stood for understanding and moderation. They allowed themselves to be used as a tool to do great damage to Islam, a religion they espoused, and to all Muslims.
>
> "I would like to make it very clear that real Muslims throughout the world will never allow a minority of defiant extremists to speak in the name of Islam and distort its spirit of tolerance.
>
> "Your friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia denounced and condemned the attacks of 11 September as strongly as the American people did. Like them, we are convinced that nothing can ever justify the shedding of innocent blood or the taking of lives and the terrorizing of people, regardless of cause or motive. Therefore, we do not simply reiterate our sincere condolences to the victims' relatives; we also assure all of our continued will and determination to do all we can to combat that malignant evil and uproot it from our world. My country will maintain its firm resolve to combat terrorism unilaterally and jointly with the international coalition. We shall pursue the war against terrorism relentlessly. Our drive emanates from our firm conviction that terrorism is a pernicious disease that poses a lethal threat to every human society and every effort must be made to confront and defeat it."

Saudi Arabia's position regarding terrorism has always been very clear, dispassionate and responsible. That is logical since our country was honoured by God to be the custodian of the Muslims' holiest sites, and it is also the birthplace of the heavenly message of Islam. Thus, we want to uphold the principles and teachings of the Islamic faith.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaffirms its total support for all Security Council resolutions related to the question of terrorism. It has been cooperating fully with the international community in implementing those resolutions, with the aim of combating terrorism. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has taken the necessary steps to close any gaps in regulations related to charitable fundraising that might be exploited for illegal purposes.

The competent authorities in Saudi Arabia have put in place all the necessary measures to implement Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). Moreover, the Government of Saudi Arabia has lent its support to every international effort, within the framework of the Security Council, to crack down on terrorism by all means approved by the international community.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has itself suffered from terrorist acts, has enacted regulations that mete out punishment to the perpetrators of terrorist acts. Moreover, it has made the fight against terrorism part of its basic school curricula.

At the regional level, Saudi Arabia was one of the first countries to sign the Pan-Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism, adopted by the League of Arab States in 1998, and it is also a signatory to the Convention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism.

At the international level, Saudi Arabia is a party to 10 conventions and agreements that deal with various forms of terrorism. We sincerely look to the United Nations, which represents all countries of the world, to make the international effort to combat terrorism a truly global one, without bias or discrimination, with the primary goal of serving all members of the international community and protecting them from the evils of terrorism, including State-supported terrorism.

Confronting terrorism, international cooperation in tracking down terrorist organizations and the exploration of all ways and means to eradicate it

represent important steps towards eliminating that dangerous phenomenon. However, the international effort against terrorism, regardless of its effectiveness, will not be capable of totally eradicating that phenomenon unless it addresses its underlying causes, including political, economic and social circumstances that become ground for extremism, violence and terrorism.

The decision to eradicate terrorism has been taken, without hesitation or vacillation. However, if our true objective is to eradicate the possibility of its recurrence, then attention must be paid to the political, economic and social conditions that, in many instances, create grounds for extremism, especially when those conditions reach serious proportions and the possibility for peaceful change and development does not exist.

For example, the deteriorating conditions of oppressed people, whether they suffer injustice and oppression or are subject to foreign occupation, and the international community's inability, for one reason or another, to find just solutions to those problems will ultimately lead to a situation in which opportunity is created for people with evil intentions to take advantage of naïve young men who are led to believe that violence and terrorism are the only and ideal means for correcting the injustice that afflict them.

Thirty-five years have passed since the Palestinian people came under the suffocating Israeli occupation. The cycle of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories will never end unless the legitimate rights of the Palestinians are respected. Those rights have been acknowledged by the international community as a whole and are enshrined in many United Nations resolutions and have become legally binding through various international agreements signed by consecutive Israeli Governments with the Palestinian side.

The obligations contained in those agreements have been completely ignored by the Israelis, whether they relate to the continuation of the occupation or the treatment of the Palestinian people and their legitimate leadership.

The policy of siege, starvation, military incursions, the destruction of property and the desecration of holy places totally contravenes not only signed agreements, but also international law and humanitarian norms.

Furthermore, the Government of Ariel Sharon is marginalizing the Palestinian Authority, established under the Oslo Accords, isolating the Palestinian territories and destroying their infrastructure. In addition, with nothing left to destroy, recently Sharon has implemented a policy not only of imprisoning, but also of assassinating, members of the Palestinian leadership. He recently and blatantly declared that Israel is no longer bound by any agreement signed with the Palestinians, including the Oslo Accords.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories will undoubtedly lead to a humanitarian disaster resulting from the economic siege, the unchecked spread of disease and the virtual collapse of public health and security forces.

The most important fact to be recalled by all, particularly the Israeli people, is that the goal of security promised by the current Israeli Government will never materialize. That is due directly to the policies and practices of that Government, which chose to ignore dialogue and negotiations and opted for oppression and violence as a means of resolving the Palestinian problem.

President Bush's statement to the Assembly concerning the difficulty of attaining peace between the Palestinians and Israelis, without providing the freedom necessary for both, conforms with the current situation in the occupied territories, which continue to face a cycle of violence and suffering because one side, namely the Palestinians, has been denied its right to freedom and independence.

Therefore, the exit point of that dilemma is Israel's acknowledgement of the importance of the existence of a Palestinian State established on a basis of constitutional legality and capable of conducting negotiations and resolving pending problems that cannot be ignored or bypassed. That is the action that must be taken if we truly intend to put an end to the crisis in the occupied territories, the price of which is being paid by both Palestinians and Israelis.

We believe that an independent Palestinian State, based on a constitution binding on all Palestinians, and specifying the basis and rules governing their relations with Israel, will ultimately constitute a guarantee not only for the Palestinians, but also for the Israelis themselves, because the Israeli side will have the assurance of dealing with a legitimate entity with clear characteristics, structures and institutions. Their future

relations will determine their responsibilities. To achieve this goal, the international community must move to end the humanitarian catastrophe and suffering faced by the Palestinian people.

There is also a dire need to halt the violence raging in the area through a practical and dispassionate treatment of the security situation. That clearly means that the international community must hold the Israeli Government accountable to the same level of security obligations that is required of the Palestinian Authority. To limit the security obligations to the Palestinian side alone is neither practical nor a means of solving the problem. It is incumbent on all of us to work together to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians and to take the necessary practical steps to put the Palestinian problem on the path to the desired settlement.

As far as the comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned, we see in the Arab peace initiative adopted at the Beirut Arab Summit a historic move that contains all the requirements for a just and permanent peace in the Middle East based on resolutions of international legitimacy and supported by all Arab States. It would lead to Israel's full withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and to normalization of Arab relations with Israel.

There is another problem that has reached crisis proportions and has become a source of grave danger to the security and stability of the Middle East: the issue of Iraq and its implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. President Bush mentioned in his speech before the General Assembly the need to refer this matter to the Security Council in order to have the appropriate resolutions adopted. That represents a new and positive approach that we view with satisfaction. Without a doubt, that step has led to a new climate, resulting in the decision of the Iraqi Government to allow the unconditional return of United Nations weapons inspectors. That development, which will avert confrontation through diplomatic means, shows that a positive step will, in most cases, lead to a reciprocal positive step. At this point, it is appropriate to express our satisfaction with the Iraqi Government's prompt response to the call of the ministerial committee of the League of Arab States, which met in parallel with the General Assembly. We believe that it is now the Security Council's responsibility to undertake serious efforts to alleviate the suffering of the brotherly people of Iraq. We also believe that it is now the responsibility of Iraq to promptly carry out its pledges to allow the return of the United Nations weapon inspection teams without prior conditions.

The world has suffered great destruction and human misery during the last century, which was characterized by bloody confrontations, hate, conflicts and violence. In a world of intertwined dependencies and common interests, the peace and stability of humankind depend largely upon the international community's determination to forsake wars, renounce violence, combat terrorism and settle disputes by peaceful means and through the promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue, as well as by consolidating international cooperation, tolerance and understanding.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls for the establishment of an international humanitarian order based on a new form of partnership between the developed and developing countries, on a solid basis of cooperation, solidarity and international economic relations built on justice, equality, mutual benefits and joint responsibilities.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia looks forward to a twenty-first century governed by the rule of law and not by brutal force, a century of true pluralism in which everyone will participate in managing the affairs of the present and in creating the future, instead of excluding and ignoring others. We look forward to a year in which the moral values that govern human behaviour will prevail and in which the banners of justice, mercy and interaction among peoples will be raised in order to achieve security, stability and peace for all humanity.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. María Eugenia Brizuela de Ávila, Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador.

Mrs. Brizuela de Ávila (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express, on behalf of the people and the Government of El Salvador, our most sincere congratulations to the President on being elected to conduct the work of this session of the General Assembly.

Likewise, we would like to express our recognition to Mr. Han Seung-soo for the successful work he carried out during the past session. We commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his work and attention in the prevention and solution of conflicts, and we encourage him to continue moving forward in the reform process of the United Nations.

We welcome to this important world forum the Swiss Confederation and, soon, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in their new capacity of Member States. In this context, we reiterate our request to review the special international situation of the Republic of China on Taiwan, whose 23 million inhabitants are being denied the right to representation in this forum. We nurture the hope that in the near future the participation in this world Organization of all the nations of the world without exclusion — as is currently the case with Taiwan — will become a reality.

The Government of El Salvador is convinced that it is necessary to examine new and visionary initiatives to remove existing obstacles in the discussions on the composition and role of the Security Council in the new millennium. That is necessary and essential in order for the United Nations to continue to be the principal world forum of collective action in the face of challenges to international peace and security.

This year, my country commemorated the tenth anniversary of the signing of the peace accords, which put an end to armed conflict and paved the way for a new reality of hope, peace, democracy and development. Our democratic process has progressively been consolidated and is advancing with normality within the same dynamic of open debates and deliberations that characterize all democracies. This has been a result of the firm desire of all Salvadorians to construct a free and democratic society, which we, the Member States, should feel proud of and part of, through the successful role played by the United Nations.

In the economic and social fields, we have achieved significant progress in strengthening peace and democracy. The Government of President Francisco Flores Pérez has strongly promoted an economic model featuring economic rights as a means to advance towards development and to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the opportunities of globalization. We have also favoured human development, investing primarily in education, health, housing and basic services, as those areas are indispensable elements contributing to social well-being, to the improvement in the quality of life of our people and to development.

Ten years after the signing of the peace accords, El Salvador has successfully culminated its peace process and is now enjoying the dividends of peace. Therefore, we are grateful for the valuable support of the international community and of the United Nations. We are particularly grateful to the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General for the peace process of El Salvador — Colombia, Mexico, Spain, Venezuela and the United States of America — for the support they offered during the unfolding of that process, whose successful outcome continues to assist efforts for conflict resolution throughout the world.

With regard to Central America, I wish to reaffirm El Salvador's spirit of integration, which leads us to attach high priority to our relations with neighbouring countries in seeking common development for the region and in strengthening the Central American integration process in its political, economic and social facets. We do so because it is only through a stable and united region that we will be able to complement one another in order to strengthen our position in the world economic environment and jointly face the challenges of globalization. Only through integration will we be able to overcome our narrow territorial limitations to effectively respond to the just demands of our citizens in the areas of education, health and opportunities for the future. Being united and open to the world as a region will be the only way we will be able to cease to appear small in the face of the great challenge of creating, with all the requisite speed, more and better jobs so that all our peoples will be able to forge for themselves a worthy future in their own homelands.

It is in that context that the Presidents of Central America have agreed on an economic integration plan of action effective immediately. That plan includes the formation of a customs union by next year. Likewise, among other things, we will continue to work on adopting common duty tariffs and facilitating trade and the free movement of all products. With that goal in mind, and having already attained positive results with the Central American agreements now in effect with Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Chile and Panama, we are also jointly negotiating free trade agreements with Canada and United States. We are also working to strengthen and implement the Puebla-Panama Plan by implementing eight large meso-American integration projects. Through the Puebla-Panama Plan we intend to take advantage of the potential of Central America and of the southern and south-eastern regions of Mexico as

a natural corridor linking North and South America and joining two oceans.

We have responsibly assumed the historical challenge to address through relevant bodies the border disagreements inherited by the current generation of Central Americans. El Salvador has done its share in this regard. We are convinced that strict compliance with international law provides the foundation for harmony among neighbouring countries. We have therefore recently reached an agreement at the presidential level with the Republic of Honduras to accelerate the demarcation of our territorial borders. Furthermore, we have also recently resorted to the International Court of Justice to exercise our right to request a revision of its 1992 judgement, but only with regard to one of the six areas in dispute in the case that we jointly submitted in 1986. Through these efforts, El Salvador and Central America are clearing the way in order to make unencumbered progress towards the realization of our common integration projects. In the end, our goal is for the borders that we are now defining through law to be erased in practice by harmony, mutual respect and the development of our peoples.

In the international sphere — having just commemorated the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks perpetrated in the United States — the Government of El Salvador would like to reiterate its firm commitment to the worldwide struggle against terrorism and all related criminal activities. We view this global effort as a joint and individual endeavour of Member States. Consequently, we see it as an effort linked to the deepest respect for the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations, in international law and in international humanitarian law. In that connection, the Government of El Salvador would like to express its gratitude for the efforts being made by the Counter-Terrorism Committee established by Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We also reiterate our complete readiness to cooperate in the unequivocal implementation of that resolution. In addition, we would like to inform the international community that El Salvador will host the third session of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism. That meeting will be held in San Salvador during the first half of 2003. We hope the meeting will adopt relevant decisions to further strengthen the hemispheric fight against this scourge.

El Salvador recognizes the progress achieved with the entry into force of the Statute of the International Criminal Court. In this regard, my Government is carrying out the necessary reviews to bring our constitutional rules in line with those of the Statute, so as to enable us to initiate the process of joining the Court.

In the same vein, I am also pleased to inform the Assembly that last week El Salvador ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

In his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Secretary-General stated that the world in which we live today is divided between rich and poor as never before in human history. That report also pointed out the harsh reality experienced by one sixth of all human kind, which daily fights to survive in a life and death struggle with sickness, hunger and natural and human disasters. Meanwhile, another sixth of mankind has attained levels of well-being that would have been unimaginable just a few decades ago. Between both extremes there are the 4 billion inhabitants of developing countries who, although we may no longer be living on the verge of disaster, are very far from achieving the security, capacity and material well-being enjoyed by the developed world.

As a developing country, El Salvador is following the course charted at Monterrey. We hope that the offers of funding made by various countries at the Conference will become a reality. We are also actively participating in the preparatory work for the World Summit on the Information Society, as we are convinced of the potential benefits that connectivity and knowledge will bring to the future development of free societies.

In that sense, El Salvador shares the vision that international cooperation with medium-income countries must not be exclusively limited to technical cooperation. That cooperation should also include financial cooperation, as the fight against poverty should not be confined by borders or limited by statistics pertaining to national averages. Such figures are far from being a true reflection of existing realities in different places. Our renewed democracies need to

be consolidated, strengthened and made sustainable in a way that gives everyone access to a better quality of life.

Another of the major challenges we face, namely, natural disasters, could nullify the efforts we have made throughout the years. The devastating effects of such phenomena are no longer limited solely to traditionally vulnerable regions. As was the case recently in many European countries, other regions that previously had not been very much affected by natural disasters are now experiencing them. In this connection, the people and the Government of El Salvador would like to reiterate their complete solidarity with the Governments of affected countries and with the families that have suffered as a result of the devastating floods in Europe.

The Government of El Salvador calls on the international community to jointly implement the agreements reached in the five basic areas taken up by the World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place recently in Johannesburg, South Africa. Those included water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture and biological diversity. All of them are of crucial importance to the future of the environment, particularly in developing countries.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating the firm commitment and political will of the Government of El Salvador to contribute actively to the search for collective and individual solutions to the problems that we will take up during this session of the General Assembly. We also wish to reiterate our confidence in the work that the Secretary-General is doing on behalf of the nations that make up our Organization and on the basis of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. Along with the strengthening of multilateralism, those purposes and principles remain entirely valid in the new millennium.

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): I wish to exercise my right of reply to the statement about the Armenian genocide made yesterday in this Hall by the representative of Turkey in his exercise of the right to reply to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, in his address during the general debate of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, said the following:

> "We extend our profound appreciation to all those Governments, legislatures and international bodies that have recognized the Armenian genocide and pledge our cooperation to all those that are currently in the process of reaffirming the facts of that crime against humanity. As a signatory to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Armenian Government places a high priority on the struggle to prevent future genocide and to stand up against all attempts to deny past genocide." (*see A/57/PV.9*)

Indeed, I should like to thank the representative of Turkey for understanding the message correctly and for once again bringing the issue of the Armenian genocide to the attention of this body.

In that regard, allow me to make a few comments. The twentieth century began for Armenians with the tragedy of genocide and mass deportations in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 and 1923, which served the deliberate, premeditated ultranationalist objective of wiping out the Armenian community in Ottoman Turkey. The first genocide of the twentieth century unfolded in full force and continued until it had consumed the lives of 1.5 million Armenians.

The Armenian genocide is an undeniable and incontrovertible fact, and that is absolutely clear not only to us, but to a large number of countries that have officially recognized and condemned the crime of genocide committed against the Armenian people. Yet Turkey spares no effort to deny this shameful event of its past. There is nothing new about the accusations, falsifications and inventions that the Turkish Government is presenting in its futile attempts to deny or to justify what international law defines as genocide.

The representative of Turkey made a reference to "unsubstantiated evidence" of the Armenian genocide. The genocide is not something that needs to be proved. Historians and scholars have done their job, and

extensive and well-documented evidence of the Armenian genocide is available in many Turkish, Russian, British and American archives. It is regrettable that Turkey has preferred deliberate and willful ignorance to a sober and impartial approach.

The Armenian genocide showed that such an inhuman crime could be committed. The impunity of the genocide policy of the Ottoman Empire brought new brutalities. The most striking evidence is Hitler 's rhetorical flourish about his plans to invade Poland in 1939: "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" Those words can be read in the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

I should like to particularly stress one more point, which is of special relevance to the United Nations. In 1948, the Organization adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Mr. Raphael Lemkin, author of the term "genocide" and one of the authors of the Convention, emphasized the international community's need for such a Convention by speaking of the necessity "to prevent from happening again what happened to Armenians during World War I and to Jews during World War II". Regrettably, Turkey, one of the parties to the Convention, does not want to acknowledge that denial is a continuation of genocide or, as some note, it is the final act of genocide.

Turkey's continuing denial of the genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire has only intensified our aspirations to historical justice. Turkey's pointless diversions, accusations and distortions have no bearing on the Armenian genocide, on its international recognition or on its scholarly examination. They do, however, make a point about the evil of genocide and of its denial. Instead of condemning the criminal Committee of Union and Progress, in charge of the Ottoman Government during the First World War, Turkey embraces them today. Instead of distancing itself from the murderous policy of genocide, Turkey tirelessly seeks to justify it. That is a destructive policy that in no way, shape or form can be construed as a step towards healing, reconciling, understanding or improving the relations between Turkey and Armenia. There is a better way of dealing with the painful past: namely, coming to grips with the truth of the matter.

As President Kocharian said in this Hall two years ago in his address before the Millennium Summit: "Penitence is not humiliation; rather, it elevates individuals and nations" (*A/55/PV.6, p. 11*). In its resolution of 1987, the European Parliament referred to the fact that the recognition of the Armenian genocide must be viewed as a profoundly humane act of moral rehabilitation towards the Armenians, which can only bring honour to the Turkish Government. Indeed, many nations have found their spiritual and moral resurrection in the surge of validations of the truth — in facing their own past squarely.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Turkey to exercise the second right of reply, which will be limited to five minutes.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): I do not wish to indulge myself in a prolonged debate, as I see that it is futile indeed to expect my Armenian colleague to question at least some aspects of his arguments. I would say only this. As is very well known, at the end of the First World War, the Armenians, reminding the victorious Powers that they had also fought as belligerents while they were Ottoman subjects, wanted to be represented at the Paris and Sèvres Conferences. Here, I would like to quote the Armenian leader Mr. Ali Aharonian himself, speaking at the Paris Peace Conference, from *Papers Related to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Paris Peace Conference 1919*, printed by the Government Printing Office in Washington:

> "At the beginning of the war, our nation not only forgot all grievances against Tsarist rule and rallied whole-heartedly to the Russian flag in support of the Allied cause, but our fellow countrymen in Turkey and all over the world offered to the Government of the Czar (the archives of the Russian Embassy in Paris prove this) to establish and support Armenian legions at their own expense to fight side by side with Russian troops under the command of Russian generals."

Indeed, in the words of an eminent scholar, whom some of our Armenian friends do not like to have quoted, Professor Bernard Lewis,

> "What happened to the Armenians was the result of a massive Armenian armed rebellion ... which began even before war broke out and continued on a larger scale. Great numbers of Armenians ... joined the Russian forces invading Turkey."

And elsewhere he stated:

> "The Armenians want to benefit from both worlds. On the one hand, they speak with pride of their struggle against Ottoman despotism, while on the other hand, they compare their tragedy with the Jewish genocide."

Lastly, with regard to the process of achieving international recognition, I would like to quote the spokesperson for the British Foreign Office, Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale, speaking on 14 April 1999:

> "The British Government had condemned the massacres at the time. But in the absence of unequivocal evidence that the Ottoman Administration took a specific decision to eliminate the Armenians under their control at that time, British Governments have not recognized those events as indications of genocide. Nor do we believe it is the business of Governments of today to review events of over 80 years ago, with a view to pronouncing on them."

I would like to end my statement by paying tribute to the memory of all those who perished — Turks, Armenians and others — who perished at that very tragic moment of our shared history.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Armenia to exercise the second right of reply, which will be limited to five minutes.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): I apologize for taking the floor again. I would like to make just a few additional comments on the remarks of the representative of Turkey. First, I would like to remind the representative of Turkey that the Armenian genocide began with "Kristallnacht", the night of 24 April 1915, the first day of genocide, when more than three hundred Armenian intellectuals were brutally murdered by Turkish authorities, thus signaling the beginning of mass annihilation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

It is not my intention to go into archives in this General Assembly Hall. I would just like to quote one statement by the Ambassador of Germany, representing a Government allied with Turkey, who reported as early as in July 1915,

> "The manner in which the relocation is being carried out demonstrates the Government is really pursuing the aim of destroying the Armenian race in Turkey".

In July 1917, his successor reported,

> "The policy of extermination has largely been achieved. The current leaders of Turkey fully subscribe to this policy."

It is based on those and other facts that back in 1919 the Kemalist Court tried and convicted a number of high-ranking young Turkish officials for their role in what the Turkish Government then called the massacre and destruction of the Armenians.

The unfortunate habit of the Turkish Government to deny the Armenian genocide continues to manifest itself in an unending stream of falsifications. If Turkey today encounters difficulties in building normal relations with its neighbours, perhaps it is because it has such an inconsistent and untenable view of the past, of the historical record as understood by the rest of the world. This sadly contorted effort to argue that evidence of the Armenian genocide is questionable is but a reflection of the length to which Turkey is prepared to go in order to press upon the world its fictive denial of the truth.

For the perpetrators of the Armenian genocide it behooves them to engage in introspection, to face and learn from their history, to question how such violence could have occurred, to examine what was there that lead them down the road to genocide and to find some redemption through appropriate acts of contrition, beginning, but not ending, with knowledge and acceptance of the truth. If they are unable or unwilling to deal with the truth, and they still try to maintain their righteous self-image, then they may again find themselves on a path towards victimization of other groups.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.